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# Senior Initiative

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Senior Initiative is a multi-year, cross-departmental project to (1) improve coordination, community outreach and promotion of programs designed to serve seniors, and (2) identify and plan for the short and long term needs of seniors.

## LINKAGE TO COUNTY RESULTS AREAS

- ❖ *Vital Living for All of our Residents*
- ❖ *Healthy and Sustainable Communities*
- ❖ *Safe Streets and Secure Neighborhoods*

## PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Uma S. Ahluwalia of the Department of Health and Human Services at 240.777.1266 or Rachel Silberman of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2786 for more information regarding this Initiative's operating budget.

## FY15 APPROVED ENHANCEMENTS

The FY15 Approved Budget includes approximately \$32.9 million in tax supported resources identified for seniors, including funds for community organizations that augment County services for seniors. It represents approximately \$6.4 million in additional tax supported resources to continue the implementation of the Senior Initiative in FY15. In addition, the approved budget includes \$13.4 million in non-tax supported resources for seniors.

### Department of Recreation

- Increase operating hours at the Margaret Schweinhaut, Damascus, and Holiday Park senior centers, restoring hours and programs reduced during the recession to help meet growing demand (\$56,846).
- Extend to a full year the Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA) Senior Transportation Partnership providing flexible, fixed-route senior bus services in local neighborhoods with limited door-to-door pick up and drop off transportation services to the Long Branch, Holiday Park, Margaret Schweinhaut, White Oak, and Damascus Senior Centers (\$318,750).
- Extend to a full year Senior Mini Trips to activities and events in the Metropolitan Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, District of Columbia areas from each of the five Senior Centers and at each of the 55+ Active Adult Recreation Programs (\$25,120).
- Enhance Multilingual Senior Programming services (\$80,000).
- Hire a Manager for Senior Services to help meet the growing needs of 55+ Active Adult Recreation programming at Senior Centers (\$86,814).

### Department of Health and Human Services

- Add funds for a Social Worker position in the Adult Protective Services/Social Services to Adults Program to address an increase in investigations of financial exploitation cases resulting from new bank mandatory reporting requirements (\$69,324).
- Raise the Adult Foster Care Reimbursement Rate to reduce the gap between the County and State subsidy rates for senior assisted living group homes (\$153,180).
- Add funds for a Program Manager in the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, allowing the program to add volunteers and provide more long-term care facility residents with protection and advocacy (\$65,385).
- Add funds for Adult Day Care subsidies to increase the number of clients able to attend an Adult Day Care program two days per week for socialization and medical supervision (\$116,565).
- Add funds for a Senior Fellow – Caregiver Support position and operating funds to coordinate outreach to seniors and persons with disabilities regarding the available services to ease the burden on caregivers (\$50,835).
- Provide in-home nurse monitoring services to more than 2,000 senior and disabled clients receiving services through the State's new Medicaid waiver program, Community First Choice Program (\$2,606,250).

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### **Department of Transportation – Transit Services**

- Reinvest Call N Ride savings from conversion to electronic cards into the program by expanding income eligibility for subsidized taxi trips for low-income persons with disabilities and seniors (\$765,000).
- Increase funding for Seniors Ride Free (\$56,763).

### **Department of Fire and Rescue Services**

- Enhance Senior Safety Outreach to provide home safety evaluations, education, and outreach programs to address the specific needs associated with the projected growth in the County’s senior citizen population (\$100,000).

### **Non-Departmental Account Community Grants**

- Provide grants to our community partners of \$1,593,406 for 49 proposals for seniors. Community organizations augment and supplement government programs by providing services such as intergenerational programming, health and wellness initiatives, transportation (including handicap accessible vehicles), culturally and linguistically appropriate case management and legal assistance, and safety net services such as utility support and food assistance. These community organizations are critical to an effective network of services and are often able to provide these services in a more cost-effective, culturally appropriate, and flexible way than County Government. They are also able to leverage community resources that may be unavailable to County Government.

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Senior Initiative is a comprehensive response to the various issues facing the growing number of seniors in our community. Montgomery County, much like the rest of the United States, will experience unprecedented growth in the senior population in the coming decades. The Maryland Department of Planning projects that between 2000 and 2020 the senior population will increase by 80 percent. During that period, the non-senior population will increase by only 12 percent, thus seniors as a group are growing over six times faster than non-seniors. By 2020, seniors will comprise 22 percent of the County population, compared to 18 percent currently.

Recognizing the need to address the needs of this burgeoning population, the County Executive is strategically enhancing a variety of critical senior services. At the same time, through the creation of a Senior Subcabinet, the County Executive has charged his departments with ensuring that senior services are delivered in a coordinated and effective manner.

The leadership of this effort is provided by the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Director of the Department of Recreation who serve as Co-Chairs of the County Executive’s Senior Subcabinet on Vital Living. The Senior Subcabinet has representatives from the following departments: Health and Human Services, Recreation, Fire and Rescue Service, Transit Services, Public Libraries, Housing and Community Affairs, Police, Office of Consumer Protection, Commission for Women, Office of Public Information, Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, CountyStat, and the Office of Community Partnerships (Community Engagement Cluster), as well as the Commission on Aging.

Building upon previous efforts to assess the current needs of seniors and plan for emerging needs (e.g., “A Report on the Needs of Low-Income Seniors in Montgomery County, MD,” June 2002; “Strategic Planning Study of Senior Needs,” December 2002; “Imagining An Aging Future for Montgomery County, MD,” May 2007; “Senior Outreach Strategic Communications Plan for Montgomery County,” October 2007, the “County Executive’s Senior Summit”, November 2008; “A Community for a Lifetime: The Senior Agenda”, December 2012) eight key areas have been identified as essential for Montgomery County seniors to “age in community” with safety, dignity, and vitality:

- Communications and Outreach
- Housing and Zoning
- Transportation and Mobility
- Health and Wellness
- Civic and Social Engagement
- Home and Community Support Services
- Safety
- Employment

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Services benefiting seniors are incorporated in the general department program offerings, as well as targeted services. These services respond to multiple critical needs facing the County at this time and the desired outcomes to promote “vital living for all residents.” Below are some of the major County government programs currently supporting County seniors:

#### **Department of Recreation**

- Offer Senior Outdoor Adventures in Recreation day trip programs for active adults over 55 years of age.
- Operate the five full service Senior Centers that offer ample social opportunities, health and wellness programs, life-long learning and educational programs, exercise classes, dance classes, lectures, cultural programs, and more.
- Operate the eleven 55+ Active Adult Programs where seniors gather for educational programs, friendship, entertainment, sports, and other activities.
- Operate the Senior Sneaker Exercise Program that provides for adults over 55 years of age access to quality exercise and fitness rooms at Recreation Department Community Centers with a reduced annual membership fee.

#### **Department of Health and Human Services**

- Prevent or reverse nursing home placement for Medicaid eligible persons of all ages by providing supports planning and community based services (including assisted living).
- Transport seniors using Transit Services Ride-On buses during off-peak hours to provide transportation to County community recreation centers once or more per week and to grocery stores for a limited number of senior housing complexes one time each week.
- Provide supportive contractual services to seniors including “friendly visitor” services, escorted grocery shopping, legal assistance, and Alzheimer’s support services.
- Continue the Escorted Transportation Project with the Jewish Council for the Aging to expand and coordinate new and existing escorted transportation services.
- Promote and expand transportation options available to seniors and people with disabilities through the new County Mobility and Transportation Manager who will work with advocates and public and private service providers.
- Offer one-stop, hands-on assistance and outreach to Montgomery County residents regarding services for seniors, persons with disabilities, and their families and caregivers to clarify their needs and identify and access resources.
- Help protect more than 7,700 County residents in 190 assisted living facilities and 34 nursing homes by maintaining a regular presence, investigating complaints, and advocating for seniors rights.
- Guarantee that seniors over the age of 60 have access to meals, nutrition education, the opportunity for socialization at senior centers, churches, senior apartment buildings, and have food delivered directly to the homes of people who cannot get out or prepare healthful meals on their own.
- Provide home delivered meals to chronically ill clients, age 60 and above, to address the nutritional needs of the County’s most frail and vulnerable seniors who are home-bound due to illness or disability. Special consideration is given to low income individuals, minority individuals, those in rural communities, those with limited English proficiency, and those at risk of institutional care.
- Investigate complaints of maltreatment for abuse and neglect against seniors, secure resources, and provide surrogate decision-making for adults adjudicated through the courts.
- Provide in-home support services to help vulnerable seniors remain safe and cared for in the community and to prevent premature and/or inappropriate institutionalization.
- Offer the Home Care Chore Services Program, which is targeted to low income frail elderly and people with disabilities who need help with light cleaning, vacuuming, laundry, and/or meal preparation in order to remain in their own homes and in the community.
- Provide Heavy Chore Services to serve seniors with hoarding behaviors to prevent evictions, condemnation, or to correct health and safety conditions. Services include heavy commercial cleaning and pest fumigation.
- Offer short-term respite services to caregivers who provide ongoing care to frail elders and provide relief from the demands of care-giving.
- Provide Senior Mental Health Services for home-bound seniors and coordinate medication with medical providers.
- Help meet older adult challenges of remaining independent in their homes as they age in communities through the “Village” model, a grassroots, consumer driven, and volunteer first model. The Village Coordinator assists current and emerging “Villages” and promotes the creation of new ones.

#### **Department of Transportation – Transit Services**

- Subsidize taxi service for low income seniors, age 67 and older, to allow for greater mobility and quality of life.
- Provide information and linkage to transportation resources to senior citizens, maintain a database of resources, help callers fill out forms for transportation programs, and links caller with transportation providers.
- Provide fixed route service (Ride On) to many senior centers.

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- Transport seniors to five senior centers and for grocery shopping trips during Ride On's off-peak period.
  - Provide free bus fares on Ride On and Metrobus during off-peak periods (M-F 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM) and half price fares at all other times.
  - Improve over 2,510 bus stops as part of Ride On's safety and accessibility program.

#### **Department of Public Libraries**

- Provide library materials and programs relevant to senior issues. Topics include book discussions, finances, retirement, taxes, health, employment, technology, consumer issues, English language learning, and others.
- Provide lifelong learning services and materials, including our seniors-focused web page, and training on how to use e-books and computers.
- Offer large print library materials and other accessibility equipment and services for seniors.
- Provide Metro Senior SmarTrip cards and reduced fare paper fare cards for purchase at all library branches.
- Provide substantial volunteer opportunities that are frequently utilized by seniors at every branch.

#### **Department of Fire and Rescue Services (MCFRS)**

- Identify strategies to reduce fire risk among the elderly.
- Identify homebound seniors and those with disabilities to provide information on fire safety and risk reduction assistance including the installation of approved smoke alarms appropriate for their needs.
- Increase collaboration between MCFRS, County agencies and departments, and professional organizations providing services to seniors.
- Initiate a public education and awareness campaign to educate and inform residents regarding the installation and upgrade of smoke alarms required by Maryland's new Smoke Alarm Law.
- Initiate a door-to-door campaign offering department services to seniors including the evaluation of existing residential smoke alarm equipment, replacement of outdated smoke alarms, and general injury prevention information.
- Offer a free residential safety evaluation for seniors.
- Assist and partner with communities and neighborhood organizations on the development of home fire evacuation and escape plans.
- Ensure members of the department are aware and responsive to the needs and risks faced by senior citizens.

#### **Department of Housing and Community Affairs**

- Continue partnering with "Rebuilding Together" by funding some administrative costs for a highly leveraged program that provides home repairs for low-income homeowners, most of which are seniors and are unable to undertake home repairs on their own.
- Continue partnering with the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County to provide rental assistance to low-income seniors.

#### **Office of the State's Attorney**

- Continue to prosecute cases of financial elder abuse, physical abuse, and neglect of the elderly through the State's Attorney's Special Prosecutions Division and the Family Violence Division. The units collaborate with the Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse and Neglect Task Force of Montgomery County to combat elder physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and elder financial exploitation.

#### **Community Engagement Cluster**

- Partner with community organizations to provide free tax preparation to low-to-moderate income Montgomery County residents with special attention to seniors over 60 years old.
- Support opportunities for adults over 60 to increase access to and participate in community activities, socialization, and lifelong learning.
- Provide individual and couples senior counseling services.
- Offer the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

#### **Office of Consumer Protection**

- Continue to recruit seniors and retired professionals to work at Office of Consumer Protection as volunteers providing administrative and investigative assistance.
- Expand upon Office of Consumer Protection outreach initiatives to provide consumer education regarding consumer scams that target seniors and vulnerable adults.
- Collaborate with legislators and consumer organizations to enact and enhance laws designed to protect seniors from deceptive trade practices.

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**Office Human Resources**

- Offer the Senior Fellows program to augment the County's workforce by tapping into the skill sets of highly talented, experienced, and seasoned professionals which includes seniors.

**Department of Finance**

- Continue the Senior Tax Credit for eligible residents at least 70 years of age that reduces the taxpayer's tax bill.

**Department of Environmental Protection**

- Access an exemption for curbside refuse and recycling services available to any individual who because of physical limitations (disability or age) is unable to bring containers to the curb.

**Office of Public Information**

- Produce "Seniors Today," a monthly cable television show highlighting services and programs of interest to seniors.
- Provide leadership for the Senior Subcabinet on Vital Living Committee's communications and outreach.
- Create and distribute the Senior Brochure Series including Transportation Options for Seniors (translated into eight languages) and Caregiving Resources.

**Senior Initiative  
FY15 Approved Operating Budget  
Tax-Supported**

Department	Project/Program	FY15 Approved
Health and Human Services	Mental Health Services for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities	487,523
	Aging and Disability Services Resource Unit	188,632
	Senior Community Programs	1,586,088
	The Occupational Therapist initiative	120,170
	Senior Food Program	742,320
	Adult Protective Services/SSTA/ Public Guardianship	2,951,880
	The Adult Day Care Subsidies Initiative	221,565
	Respite Services	331,331
	The Home Care Services program	2,104,544
	Senior Group Homes	90,000
	Adult Foster Care	687,255
	Ombudsman Services.	425,737
	Home and Community Based Waiver Program	3,490,756
	Senior Dental Services.	450,653
The Medical Assistance Eligibility Services	929,496	
<b>Sub-total, Health and Human Services</b>		<b>14,807,951</b>
Recreation	Long Branch Senior Center	111,737
	Damascus Senior Center	125,742
	Schweinhaut Senior Center	197,184
	Holiday Park Senior Center	283,286
	Senior Neighborhood Programs	249,622
	White Oak Community Recreation Center Senior programs	124,091
	Senior Outdoor Adventure Recreation	244,574
	JCA Senior Transportation	637,500
	Senior Mini Trips	50,240
	Increase Operating Hours at Three Senior Centers	56,846
	Add Manager III - Senior Services	86,814
Expand Multilingual Senior Programming	80,000	
<b>Sub-total, Recreation</b>		<b>2,247,636</b>
Transportation	Call N Ride Program	4,190,169
	Jewish Council on Aging/Connect A Ride	153,860
	Special Transportation	45,000
	Seniors/Disabled Ride Free Program	182,003
	Reinvest Call N Ride Savings in Expanding Income Eligibility (765,000)	-
<b>Sub-total, Transportation</b>		<b>4,571,032</b>
Other Departments	Community Engagement Cluster - Individual and Couples Counseling	42,000
	Community Engagement Cluster - RSVP Leadership	32,702
	Police - Project Lifesaver Program	12,500
	State's Attorney - Senior Financial Exploitation Prevention Initiative	566,023
	Human Resources - Senior Fellow expansion	100,000
	County Attorney - Senior Issues	122,239
	Department of Housing and Community Affairs - St. Camillus (Victory Oaks)	5,000,000
	Department of Housing and Community Affairs - Parkview at Aspen Hill	3,800,000
Community Grants NDA - Grants for Senior Services	1,593,406	
<b>Sub-total, Other Departments</b>		<b>11,268,870</b>
<b>Total Tax-Supported</b>		<b>32,895,489</b>

Note: Appropriations reported for programs in the Department of Transportation include funds supporting both seniors and the disabled, except Jewish Council on Aging/Connect-A Ride which serves older adults (50+). All other appropriations reflect only funds attributed to senior services.

## Non-Tax Supported

Department	Project/Program	FY15 Approved
Health and Human Services	Aging and Disability Services Resource Unit	507,107
	Senior Community Programs	898,374
	Senior Food Program.	1,688,828
	Adult Protective Services/SSTA/ Public Guardianship	2,327,621
	Respite Services	90,785
	The Home Care Services program	715,720
	Senior Group Homes	90,139
	Adult Foster Care	279,848
	Ombudsman Services	279,137
	The Medical Assistance Long Term Care program	2,457,729
<b><i>Sub-total, Health and Human Services</i></b>		<b>9,335,289</b>
Other Departments	Department of Housing and Community Affairs - HOME Care Partners, Inc.	20,000
	Department of Transportatin - Call N Ride Program	379,110
	Fire and Rescue - Senior Safety Outreach	100,000
	Department of Transportation - Medicaid Special Transportation	3,526,720
<b><i>Sub-total, Other Departments</i></b>		<b>4,025,830</b>
<b>Total Non-Tax Supported</b>		<b>13,361,119</b>

Note: Appropriations reported for programs in the Department of Transportation include funds supporting both seniors and the disabled. All other appropriations reflect only funds attributed to senior services.

